

Conversation with Congressman Al Green Regarding the ITC Tank Fire
March 29, 2019

Participants:

EPA: David Gray, Ronnie Crossland, Adam Adams and Carmen Assunto

Representative's Office: Congressman Al Green and staffer named Matt in DC that works on Homeland Security issues.

Purpose:

The representative was interested in EPA's activities associated with the response to the ITC Tank Fire.

EPA's Points:

- Working with the State of Texas and USCG to assess air conditions.
- Mobilized EPA's unique assets:
 - ASPECT which is low flying plane that monitors the air and take high quality imagery
 - TAGA bus which is a mobile laboratory that can drive through communities to assess air quality
- Individual Air Monitoring Teams – hand held devices are used to determine if there are elevated levels of benzene around the facility and in communities.
- Tank Farm:
 - Of the 15 tanks, about half of the tanks have been emptied which significantly reduced the level and frequency of benzene detections in the area
 - The other tanks have some quantity of materials still in them and progress is being made daily
 - On Friday (3/22), the secondary containment failed. We don't know the cause, but we didn't expect it to fail. It is designed to contain the material.
 - The failure resulted in the discharge of a large volume of material to the Tucker Bayou which is connected to water bodies downstream.
- Water Operations:
 - Working with the USCG on the removal of product from the water ways
 - Industrial booms are in place to help contain the material in place to be skimmed
 - There are still areas of high benzene due to the material and activity
 - We are collecting water samples and providing the information to the State of Texas to assist in their legal action
- Legal Action:
 - Under CERCLA we want the polluter to pay
 - On March 23, 2019, we issued an enforcement action against ITC
 - We directed the company to bring more assets to the response
 - Pleased to report that our direction has worked

Congressman Green's Questions:

- He is interested in identifying state-of-the-art secondary containment. We mentioned that advice on ways to improve any deficiencies in the ITC design and operations would be part of an investigation. We stated that the Chemical Safety Board has visited the site.
- The representative asked if there are requirements on the number of tanks that can be in one secondary containment? We mentioned the Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Program.
- The representative asked if we were sampling the groundwater? We explained that the material that was released was lighter than water and that our scientists are not advising us to sample groundwater at this time.
- He asked if the company was bonded? We committed to ask our state partners.
- Congressman Green asked if there was a complaint number for people to call? We provided him the number monitored by the responsible party. We also mentioned that we are not asking for a log or recording of calls received.